

From: S. Vetter
To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

I thank you for allowing me to add my comments to the Microsoft Settlement proposal. Hopefully it is not too late to do so. I would also like to congratulate those states for wishing a more harsher settlement as they are proper in doing so.

For many years Microsoft has grown to proportions that this country has rarely seen and they continue to grow. This company has also expanded into other areas such as: The Internet which they have stated they would not do, but they did, they have gone into the game station arena, they are going into TV / news stations (MSNBC and MSFN), and a few others.

Microsoft has also bought out other companies and continue to do so and with no end in sight. If they cannot purchase the product they may either produce a similar one or force that company out of business. Another Microsoft tactic is to bad mouth the company unjustly as you may recall the words about Linux. Another favorite tactic of Microsoft is to take them to court. Recently you may have heard about a company making a product called Lindows. This product runs the Linux operating system but is trying to allow Microsoft's products to run on it. Microsoft is claiming it will cause confusion to the consumer. So, in order to prevent this Microsoft is claiming the Lindows is too similar to Windows and will take them to court about it. If Microsoft wins, the company making Lindows will probably go out of business (one less competitor of the few remaining). You may recall the Netscape browser and the operating system called OS/2. Eventually Microsoft will be the only choice.

Lets also see another way Microsoft dominates the market place. They woo developers into making software that only works on their operating systems. Other platforms are left with little or nothing since most have gone to the Microsoft way of doing things and on their platforms.

For those of you that have not seen this at work, I invite you to look in the archives. Microsoft buys a company or a product from a company. In doing so they tell the consumer you must switch to their product or be left without support. And to do so you must pay a slightly more amount than what you purchased the original product for. Now all Microsoft has done is changed the packaging and the product to include Microsoft's name, and perhaps a new feature or two. Six months later, or maybe a little more time goes by, and they release a newer version with again a new feature or two more. And once again for a little more money. If the consumer does not buy this new version, then support will be dropped. And it continues on and on.

They have applied pressure to companies to market ONLY THEIR products of face repercussions. Such as Intel, Creative Labs, and Compaq. If an individual or company wanted to buy a computer system with another OS, where would they turn? I encourage you to try! Ever try to buy a scanner or printer that works with some other operating system? And have you walked into a computer store to buy a software package for something other than Windows?

As for Microsoft's claim about innovation. This I would like to see myself! DOS started out as someone else's product. Windows is the same. Viso and Microsoft Office, yes someone else developed these as well. The list goes on...

For the remedy the ones that have been proposed are too light and can be expressed best by calling them a slap on the wrist. Also they have no real consequences should Microsoft violate them.

The idea of splitting the company in two, while a good thought at the time, has a flaw. You end up with two Microsofts. There was no real split and prevention of people having control of both.

Some ideas on how I would propose a settlement:

Microsoft cannot purchase other software companies. Or hardware companys.

They must publish all of their interfaces - with documentation.

They must also open up the way files are stored.

Security must be added to their products.

Open up the source code.

Java / Javascript must be included in any more of their operating system releases.

They must not be able to branch out in other areas such as game machines, TV / news networks, or cable companies. (Just to name a few)

The browser must be independent of the operating system. Also any browser must allowed to be used on the operating system.

Microsoft's must be freed from controlling computer part manufacturers, software and hardware developers.

Computer vendors must be freed to market any hardware or software as they please.

To allow other vendors to get a foot hold in the market place no new releases or variations there of must halt for at least two years.

Ever wondered why Microsoft agreed to the latest proposal? Because it had little impact on them. They would loose virtually nothing.

Any action on Microsoft has to be harsh, with no loopholes, and is monitored and enforced. It must also give competitors some real hope of succeeding with their products.

I thank you for allowing me to voice my opinions.

Respectfully,

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